

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTV #2475/01 3111337  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 061337Z NOV 08  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9044  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 4583  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 1186  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 4962  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5385  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 4602  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 2987  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 5367  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2221  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0446  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 9181  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 6670  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 1597  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 5683  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 7658  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0511  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0741  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002475

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR X0XX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS  
E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: SPECIAL ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

-----  
SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
-----

Election of Barack Obama to President

-----  
Election of Barack Obama to President:  
-----

Summary:  
-----

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "In an era when America became anathema in the world, and the Wall Street

crisis dragged its people and many people all over the globe to the abyss of uncertainty and fear of the future, America chose the chance for peace and dialogue and socio-economic repair in the spirit of the New Deal."

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "The members of the new administration will see with their own eyes that no one wants peace more than Israel. No one. Congratulations President-elect Obama on a historic victory. Godspeed. "

Liberal columnist Yael Paz-Melamed wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "A new wind will blow from the White House -- not a hostile one, but a different one."

Chief Economic Editor Sever Plotker wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Obama's electrifying election call, 'yes we can!' becomes, for president-elect Obama a tough personal question: 'can he?' Can Obama? Billions of people believe that he can, and that is already an excellent start."

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized: "As a whole we must turn to the ancient rule: 'If I am not for myself, who will be?' This is the lesson to be learned from the aftermath of the U.S. elections."

Yediot Aharonot printed a letter sent by Defense Minister Ehud Barak to president-elect Barack Obama: "We assure you that you will find us to be an ally, an active partner and sponsor of a regional peace plan in order to bring calm to this conflicted area and to contribute to stability around the world."

Yediot Aharonot published a letter sent by Likud Chairman Benjamin Netanyahu to president-elect Barack Obama: "I am confident that we will be able to cooperate in order to promote peace, security and prosperity in our region."

Commentator Valery Gertz wrote in the conservative Russian-language Vesty: "The urgency of solving his country's economic problems and overcoming the financial crisis will leave little time for Barack Obama to make efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Block Quotes:

-----

#### I. "Treading Carefully"

Senior liberal columnist Akiva Eldar wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (11/6): "The shadow of the Muslim branch of Barack Hussein's family tree will force [Obama] to be particularly careful when it comes to the United States-Israel-Arab triangle. In the past eight years Israel has become addicted to the heady fragrance of the White House and Congress, which have allowed it to do as it wanted in the territories. However, George W. Bush has done Obama's work for him. In the Oval Office, Obama will find Bush's two-state vision: the Roadmap that promised peace with all Arab countries by May 2005 and a complete freeze on settlements. He will also find a copy of the letter Bush sent to Ariel Sharon, in which he promised that the United States would support an agreement based on withdrawal from all territories except the main settlement blocs and the return of refugees to a Palestinian state. Obama will have to decide when he wants to redeem these debts. The outcome of the Israeli elections will doubtless impact his decision. If the Kadima-Labor coalition remains, the president will not have to work hard to get Israel going in a desirable direction for the United States. And since Obama's first year in office is PA President Mahmoud Abbas' last, the American president will not want to be blamed for the fall of the West Bank into Hamas hands.... The decision whether to risk re-enacting the confrontation between Bill Clinton and Benjamin Netanyahu [if polls predicting a victory of the Right in Israel are borne out], and shake up relations with Israel and the Jewish community, will depend on two factors: One is how important Obama thinks an Arab-Israeli peace treaty is in defusing the crisis in Iraq and isolating Iran. The second is Obama's willingness to force Israel into translating its songs of peace into action.... It seems that Israelis who called Bush the 'friendliest president to Israel' do have something to be concerned about. In contrast, those who are concerned about Israel becoming an apartheid state living forever by the sword have new hope since yesterday. In

the meantime, it is only hope."

## II. "The Dawn of a New Era"

Ha'aretz editorialized (11/6): "The election of Barack Obama as president of the United States is a moving, historic event that inspires hope.... Obama was elected not only because of his good qualities, his personal charm and his verbal abilities. He was chosen first and foremost because he represents, in the most acute and genuine way, the change for which the citizens of the United States so desperately yearn.... In an era when America became anathema in the world, and the Wall Street crisis dragged its people and many people all over the globe to the abyss of uncertainty and fear of the future, America chose the chance for peace and dialogue and socioeconomic repair in the spirit of the New Deal.... With his election, the deepest wound in American society, which was born with slavery but continued to bleed overtly and covertly in race riots and discrimination, has begun to heal. With Barack Obama's entry into the White House, the U.S., and together with it the entire world, stands on the threshold of a new era. If Obama succeeds in fulfilling the hope that is pinned on him, the day of his election will go down as the day that wrought a change in the entire world, and will grant those living there a reason to look forward to the future with hope."

## III. "Mazal tov, Obama"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (11/6): "Just as the people of the United States were electing Barack Hussein Obama as their next president, Hamas was putting the finishing touches on a plot to abduct Israeli soldiers and break the relative cease-fire which has prevailed for the past five months.... Even as Hamas-controlled Gaza, fueled by religious fanaticism and mired in the culture of victimization, pursued its predictable violent trajectory -- 6,000 miles away, the splendor of peaceful change, representative democracy and political civility was on display for all to see.... Those in our part of the world dedicated to rejectionism, violence, and terror will soon discover anew that the relationship between Washington and Jerusalem is above partisanship. And the members of the new administration will see with their own eyes that no one wants peace more than Israel. No one. Congratulations President-elect Obama on a historic victory. Godspeed."

## IV. "The Dawn of a New Middle East"

Liberal columnist Yael Paz-Melamed wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (11/6): "When Israel pledged to vacate 26 unauthorized outposts and we did not even evacuate one of them, the friend from the White House [Bush] turned a blind eye.... A new wind will blow from the White House -- not a hostile one, but a different one. If [Obama's] advisers for the region are indeed people like Dan Kurtzer, Dennis Ross, or Martin Indyk, one can anticipate more proportionality towards Israel and its policy. Those advisers, together with the powerful pro-Israeli lobby, in addition to pressure from the Pentagon, will certainly moderate American policy as Obama might perhaps have wanted to see it. But there will be change anyway. Apart from our politics, everything is changing, and the hope blowing from Obama's election is necessary for Israel, too."

## V. "Mr. World"

Chief Economic Editor Sever Plotker wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (11/6): "Humankind is united today like never before. Democracy, in all its various and not always perfect forms, is more common today than in the past. When people describe their problems in terms of dreams and not in terms of wars, Barack Obama is viewed as the right man in the right place. He crosses borders, religions, and races. All the world is Obama. And yet, the hard part is still in front of him. Obama has never yet managed anything except his own election campaign, and that is not much. He is an American-style social democrat, who is getting America in a condition of fear and trepidation -- a strong nation, but confused and expectant.... To win in the elections you have to know how to make promises. To lead after the elections you have to know how to keep them. The test of decisions is very different from the test of

speeches. Obama's electrifying election call, 'yes we can!' becomes, for president-elect Obama a tough personal question: 'can he?' Can Obama? Billions of people believe that he can, and that is already an excellent start."

#### VI. "Why Not Here?"

Columnist and former Consul-General in Philadelphia (INSERT NAME) wrote on page one of Maariv (11/6): "Only Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Rabin, each in his own way, knew how to achieve that kind of majority when broad support was created in the street for change. One could have added Arik Sharon to that short list had he survived to prove that he harbored a genuine desire to achieve a peace agreement with the Palestinians in order to turn over a new national leaf. But how is it that the best of our elected officials who belong to the generation that was born into the State of Israel -- a war hero such as Ehud Barak, the educated and eloquent man such as Bibi Netanyahu, the experienced man such as Ehud Olmert -- collapsed like scarecrows? And where are the men and women about whom we haven't heard any more than the Americans had heard about their future leader up until two years ago?.... An Israeli Obama is possible. Nearly everything exists so that he might appear with a winning voice: That is cause for a smattering of optimism. The fact that we still haven't heard of him is cause for sorrow and envy of America, a country in trouble that on Tuesday did a great deal to get onto a new track. Please do not despair. Perhaps he is being raised here by a determined grandmother who won't stop at the banal aspiration of rearing a prodigy pianist."

#### VII. "We Have a Friend in the White House"

Yediot Aharonot printed a letter sent by Defense Minister Ehud Barak to president-elect Barack Obama (11/6): "The region in which we live is a focal point for many [economic and military] challenges. Herein lies the frontline of the struggle over global energy sources, and herein lies the frontline of the struggle between the radical axis that is headed by Iran, which aspires to obtain nuclear weapons and extends its patronage over jihadist and terrorist elements, and the pragmatic camp that contributes to the United States' interests in the region and supports the regional peace process. The fate of that struggle will have a decisive impact on world peace. It is this time of test that requires an active American role and a confident and responsible leadership. We assure you that you will find us to be an ally, an active partner and sponsor of a regional peace plan in order to bring calm to this conflicted area and to contribute to stability around the world."

#### VIII. "We Will Work Together to Achieve Peace"

Yediot Aharonot published a letter sent by Likud Chairman Benjamin Netanyahu to president-elect Barack Obama (11/6): "I am confident that we will be able to cooperate in order to promote peace, security and prosperity in our region.... From our first meeting in Washington more than a year ago I recall in particular our agreement on the Iranian danger. You were attentive and to the point and you asked: How can I help? I suggested that Congress intensify the economic pressure on the Iranian regime and, approximately a week later, you introduced a bill to step up the economic sanctions against Iran. Regrettably, the danger of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons continues to threaten us all, and I have no doubt that that issue will be at the top of your priorities as president. In our second meeting in Jerusalem a number of months ago we discussed ways of achieving peace with the Palestinians. I was happy to see that you took an interest in my approach that the way to accelerate political peace first goes through promoting economic peace between us and our neighbors. Parallel to political negotiations and to establishing security, I intend to propose to the Palestinian Authority to develop joint economic ventures with Israel, a course of action that has the ability to promote political peace. It is self-evident that the support of the United States in this process would contribute greatly to its success."

#### IX. "Obama and Israel"

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized (11/6): "Like in the past, Israel adopted a neutral approach to both candidates.... At this time, the Mideast policy of the elected Democratic candidate is unclear. As his latest statements

demonstrate, he might take steps that will lead to a rapprochement between Washington and Tehran, not between the U.S. and Syria.... At present it is Israel's duty to prepare anew and set its policy according to its interests to protect its well-being and the security of the state. As a whole we must turn to the ancient rule: 'If I am not for myself, who will be?' This is the lesson to be learned from the aftermath of the U.S. elections."

IX. "November Revolution in the U.S. Changes and Hope"

Commentator Valery Gertz wrote in the conservative Russian-language Vesty (11/6): "As far as foreign policy is concerned, ordeals that are no smaller than those faced by John F. Kennedy are awaiting the new U.S. President.... The urgency of solving his country's economic problems and overcoming the financial crisis will leave little time for Barack Obama to make efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ... unless [Israeli] radical leftist circles that view the new American President as their ideological brother conceive a new idea of a 'peace experiment' and start an amplified lobbying effort in Washington.... [Obama's] promise to eradicate American dependence on Middle Eastern oil in the next ten years is more than welcome -- and most importantly, achieving this goal is quite realistic, taking into consideration the United States' infinite abilities, as well as the talent and the will of its people.... Barack Obama has a chance of triumphing, if he proves to the world that mankind's energy and ecological problems have a creative and peaceful solution."

CUNNINGHAM